

REMARKS

This paper is in response to the Office Action dated November 21, 2003. This paper is timely filed.

A. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

By this amendment, claims 38-65 have been canceled and claims 66-95 have been added. Thus, claims 66-95 are presently pending.

B. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 66 AND ITS DEPENDENT CLAIMS ARE ALLOWABLE

Claim 66 recites a gaming apparatus including, among other things, a controller being programmed to allow a user to make a wager, to cause a first video image to be generated, the first video image representing a slot game and including a first arrangement comprising a plurality of symbols, to allow a user to select a first symbol from any of the plurality of symbols and to retrieve a second symbol from an exterior source, to allow the user to replace the first symbol with the second symbol to define a second arrangement of the plurality of symbols, and to determine a value payout associated with the second arrangement.

Independent claim 66 is allowable because it recites a gaming apparatus including the limitations of claim 51, which was indicated to be allowable in the November 21 Office Action. Moreover, claims 67-80 are also allowable as being dependent upon the independent claim 66.

C. INDEPENDENT CLAIM 81 AND ITS DEPENDENT CLAIMS ARE ALLOWABLE

Claim 81 recites a gaming method including, among other things, allowing a user to make a wager, causing a first video image to be generated, the first video image representing a slot game and including a first arrangement comprising a plurality of symbols, allowing the user to select a first symbol from any of the plurality of symbols and to retrieve a second symbol from an exterior source, allowing the user to replace the first symbol with the second symbol to define a second arrangement of the plurality of symbols, and determining a value payout associated with an outcome of said slot game based on the second arrangement.

Independent claim 81 is allowable because it recites a gaming method including the limitations of claim 51, which was indicated to be allowable in the November 21 Office Action. Moreover, claims 82-95 are also allowable as being dependent upon the independent claim 81.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above application is in condition for allowance. If there is any matter that the examiner would like to discuss, he is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,
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